

proposes any definite work must have a leader; and that it will be necessary for its members to lay aside many of their own preferences and join to carry out the plans of the leader. If he is incapable of leadership he ought to be deposed, and his place filled by one who can lead. So long as he is at the head of the enterprise he ought to be supported. Loyalty to the organization involves loyalty to the leader. This is just as true of a church as of a regiment.

It may be said that many ministers appear to desire no assistance; they go forward with their work, without calling on their parishioners to co-operate with them; they seem to expect to do about all that is done in the parish. Probably this is the result of repeated failures to secure such assistance. They may have found it easier to do the work themselves than to get others to do it. Perhaps the discovery among their parishioners of a willingness to help would lead them to modify their methods.

But it is manifestly impossible for one to do all the Christian work that ought to be done in an ordinary parish; and it is equally manifest that if the pastor could do it all, the people cannot afford to allow him to do it. For their own sakes they need to engage constantly and heartily in the labors for which the church is organized. And it is a curious sort of Christian who can sit down contentedly in the midst of the work that waits everywhere to be done for Christ and humanity, and find in his heart no impulse to engage in it.

Whatever, therefore, the habits or expectations of the pastor may be, the people of the church, if they have even the faintest apprehension of the real meaning of church-membership, will themselves have a mind to work, and will insist on finding ways of working.

The remark may be trite, but its truth is not yet sufficiently impressed upon the minds of all church members, that one effective way of helping the pastor is to attend faithfully the regular meetings of the church—the Sunday services, the prayer meetings, the Sunday school sessions—all the assemblies in which the people meet for work or worship. Even those who take no part in such services are helping if they “assist” in the French sense of the word, by being present. The pastor will preach more effectively if the seats are full. No matter how devout and spiritual he may be, he cannot help being influenced by such conditions. A large congregation rouses and inspires him. It is not merely the encouragement that he feels on account of the presence of numbers; the congregation itself is almost sure to be in a more receptive mood if the house is well filled. A large congregation is generally alert, expectant, impressible; it listens more sympathetically and more responsively than a small congregation. The pastor knows and feels this; it is a call upon him for his best service; it rouses and kindles him; his sermon is more effective. A sermon preached

to a large congregation not only does more good because more persons hear it, but also because each person who does hear it is apt to be far more impressed by the truth of it, than if he had heard it in a sparse and cold assembly.

Many churchmembers seem to suppose that the reason for going to church is simply to be taught and inspired; and that, if one does not feel like going, the loss is all his own. But this is far from being true. You go to church not only for the good you can get, but for the good you can do. You go to help to kindle, by your presence, in the great congregation, that flower of sacred love which makes the souls of those who listen sensitive and mobile under the touch of the truth. You go to help others to listen; to help to create the conditions under which they can listen well. You go to help the minister preach; to add vitality and warmth and convincing power to his words. Good preaching cannot be produced by one man; it is the fruit of the combined power of an inspired preacher and an inspired congregation, acting upon another. If the people fail to supply their part of the power the work of the minister will be effectually done.

If the people of the church generally stay away from the preaching services, or from any of them, those who come in naturally infer that the churchmembers do not highly value these services. Their habitual absence disparages the minister's work. But, even if the outsiders should not draw this inference, they will certainly fail to receive that positive spiritual influence which the presence of the churchmembers in large force would be likely to impart. The fact that the members of the church can do so much by their presence in the sanctuary to make the preaching of the Word effective, and the service of the Lord's house impressive and useful to all those who come, is a fact that should be well considered before devoting the best part of Sunday to ease and recreation.

What has been said of the Sunday services is even more true of the social meetings for conference and worship. For exactly the same reasons a large attendance at the prayer meeting kindles the interest and increases the usefulness of the meeting. This is not because of any unspiritual reliance upon members or external helps; it is the working of a law of mind which anybody can understand. True it is that God *can* work by few as well as by many; that is to say, he can work miracles; but he does not encourage us to expect that he will work miracles. He means that we shall understand and conform to the laws which he has impressed on our own natures. The law of his working is to accomplish more by many than by few. According to the ordinary methods of his grace, we should say that more spiritual power would be found in an assembly of two hundred disciples than in an assembly of one hundred. And just as ten faggots will make a fire more than ten times hotter than

one faggot, so the increase of members in an assembly of worshipers more than proportionately increases the fervor and enthusiasm of those assembled. The leader of the meeting, who is generally the pastor, always feels this influence, and the earnestness thus awakened in him will be reflected upon the meeting.

Much satire has been expended upon those who regard church-going as an important Christian duty. The ridicule is somewhat misplaced. The Christian whose religion is summed up in church attendance is, indeed, a defective type; nevertheless, the old-fashioned duty of going to meeting is duty still, and an important duty. It is not purely for his own edification that the intelligent Christian visits the house of God, but quite as much for the support and encouragement and inspiration that may be imparted to others by his presence and by his participation in the worship. And this is a service that can be rendered by many who feel themselves incapable of teaching in the Sunday-school or of testifying in the prayer-room. If all those who have the power would be faithful and conscientious in their attendance upon the services of the church, showing thus by their constant presence in its assemblies, their interest in its work and its worship, many a weary pastor would find his hands strengthened and his heart lightened.

#### To Die is Gain

Edward B. Coe, D.D.

He does not promise to us or to any of us immunity from physical death. That is not a curse, it is a blessing. It is rest for the weary hand and brain and heart. It is freedom for the imprisoned soul. But He says to us, “I have gone before you thru it; follow Me.” “He that believeth on Me shall never really die.” So it is that the darkest of all paths is brightened, and the deepest of all mysteries dispelled. We need not fear to follow where He has passed. What if the way is lonely when it goes out beyond the little space over which our vision ranges? What if we shrink with natural recoil from new and untried conditions of existence? Lo! He has gone before us thru the grave itself. And for us to die is but to follow Him.

#### The Morning Hour

How irresistible the temptation to most Christians to give the first hour of the day, when they feel strongest and freshest, to what they consider their most pressing and important work, and to leave the study of the Word and communion with God to some leisure and convenient time—a time which possibly may not come thru-out the day. Robert E. Speer revealed one secret of his power and influence when he told a friend that he denied himself an hour's sleep in the early morning that he might spend that hour alone with his Bible. Try it, dear reader, and note the result.